

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. The Examiner objected to claims 3, 5, 7, 8, 10-14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25 and 26 and rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 15, 16, 18, 21 and 24. The Examiner's objections and rejections are addressed below in substantially the same order as in the office action.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC § 102

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 15, 16, 18, 21, 24 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Baugh (US.5,146,992).

Independent Claims 1, 15 and 24

With respect to amended claims 1, 15 and 24, Baugh does not teach or suggest a shell that projects radially inward to a flowbore. The Examiner characterizes the valve seat of Baugh as a shell. To Applicant's reading, it appears that the Examiner views the valve seat as a shell with the relatively narrower end having the lips formed thereon and the wider end seating against the wall of the mandrel 33. If that is the case, then the narrower and wider ends of the valve seat of Baugh are aligned axially with the flowbore. Thus, the Baugh valve seat does not project radially inward to the flowbore but projects longitudinally along the flowbore. Claims 1, 15 and 24 have been amended to clarify the alignment of the shell relative to the flowbore. Applicant respectfully submits that the inventions claimed by amended claims 1, 15 and 24 are not taught or suggested by Baugh, and therefore are in condition for allowance.

Claims 4,6,9,18,21

Claims 4,6,9,18,21 depend from either amended claim 1 or amended claim 15, both of which are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 4,6,9,18,21 are allowable on at least those grounds.

Claims 2 and 16

The Examiner rejected claims 2 and 16. Claims 2 and 16 recite that the shell is elastically deformable. To Applicant's reading, Baugh teaches a valve seat that permanently deforms to successively larger diameters (cols. 4-5), which is not generally considered elastic deformation. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 2 and 16, which have been rewritten as independent claims, are not anticipated or obviated by Baugh and are in condition for allowance.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner objected to Claims 3, 5, 7 8, 10-14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25 and 26 being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has rewritten claims 10 and 25 in independent form. In both claims, the term "shell" has been replaced with the term "seal member" to more accurately describe the claimed invention. Claims 11-14 depend from rewritten and now independent claim 10. Claim 26 depends from rewritten and now independent claim 25. Thus, claims 10-14, and 25-26 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 3, 5, 7 and 8 depend from amended claim 1, which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, claims 3, 5, 7 and 8 are allowable on at least such grounds.

Claims 17, 19, 20, 22 and 23 depend from amended claim 15, which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, claims 17, 19, 20, 22 and 23 are allowable on at least such grounds.

CONCLUSION

For all the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the application is in a condition for allowance. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0429 (284-35906-US).

Respectfully submitted,

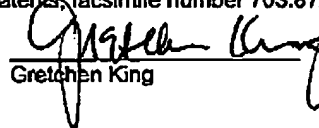
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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I certify that this correspondence, along with any papers referred to as being attached or enclosed, is being transmitted by facsimile to the attention of Commissioner for Patents, facsimile number 703.872.9306 on this 28th day of March 2005.


Gretchen King